

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-3, 5-9, 11-12 and 15-20 are pending. Claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 15, 17 and 18 have been withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1, 7-9, 11, 12, 16, 19 and 20 have been examined and rejected over prior art.

The features of claims 1 and 7 are being incorporated into currently amended claim 8. Accordingly, claims 1 and 7 are being canceled and dependent claims 16 and 19 are amended to depend from claim 8 instead of claim 7.

Claim 8 was rejected as being obvious in view of Mullee.

In currently amended claim 8, each of the plural chemical-agent supply units comprises: blending means for blending the chemical agents; a plurality of flow-rate control means each provided corresponding to a respective one of said plural common tanks; and pumping means for pumping said chemical formulation blended by said blending means.

On the contrary, these structural limitations, that is, blending means, a plurality of flow-rate control means, and pumping means are not disclosed in Mullee (U.S. Patent No. 6,306,564). Particularly, claim 8 recites pumping means included in each of the plural chemical-agent supply units, whereas Mullee does not disclose a pump included in the chemical-agent supply unit.

The Examiner argues that the difference between Mullee and the claimed invention is "mere duplication of parts." However, Mullee has no parts corresponding to the claimed pumping and other combined means.

For at least these reasons, the rejection of claims 8 and dependent claims 9, 11, 12, 16, 19 and 20 is requested to be withdrawn.

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